



Columbia Heights Police Department ALPR Information



Columbia Heights Police Department

ALPR Use

- The Columbia Heights Police Department is currently entered into a contract with Flock.
 - This contract runs from 6/4/2025- 6/19/2027
- There are currently 7 pole mounted LPR cameras and 5 Flex LPR cameras.
 - The flex cameras allow for moving and rapid deployment into areas that require additional patrol and monitoring.
 - Information captured and stored by the LPRs is deleted after 30 days automatically.
- Flock also allows the sharing of networks between agencies. Partnering with local and state agencies has broadened our search area for suspects and cut down on investigation time.
- The Flock system has proven to be a valuable tool for locating suspect vehicles as well as eliminating potential vehicles as suspects.
- As of late 2025 the Columbia Heights Police Department installed 12 dash mounted Squad Cameras which are equipped with the Axon Fleet 3 ALPR system. This installation was added to our existing contract with Axon that pertains to the Body Worn Cameras and Evidence retention



What Are ALPR Cameras?

- Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR) Cameras
 - Solar powered, Pole Mounted stationary cameras
 - Dash mounted Cameras in Police Squad Cars
- Captures plates and vehicle attributes like make, model, color and unique features on the vehicle itself.
- Captures the date/time the vehicle drove by the camera, and a still photo of the license plate/vehicle is provided
- ALPR Cameras and Vendors do not provide Owner or Driver information.
- Cloud-based data allows for custom search and alerts to be used by the Columbia Heights Police department.
 - Data is stored for 30 days then deleted automatically.
- Supports investigations through vehicle identification and possible route taken.



ALPR Cameras in Columbia Heights

- **Flock Falcon Flex**
 - Allows for moving and deployment in trouble spots
 - Requires Battery recharging and good solar alignment
 - Takes a picture of cars and captures LP and Characteristics (Make, Model, Color, Body)
 - No Live Recording
- **Flock Falcon Pole**
 - Stationary
 - Solar Powered
 - Require Permits for installation
 - Require little to no maintenance
 - Takes a picture of Cars and captures LP and Characteristics (Make, Model, Color, Body)
 - No Live recording
- **Axon Fleet 3 Camera/ALPR**
 - Dash mounted cameras in CHPD Squad Cars
 - Actively Scans License Plates as officer is driving
 - Provides alerts such as stolen vehicle or active warrants to operator
 - Officer verifies the information with dispatch before proceeding
 - Live recording takes place on the squad camera
 - ALPR works in tandem



Camera Locations as of 4/28/2026

- Flock ALPRs
 - 40th Avenue NE at University Avenue
 - 44th Avenue NE at University Avenue
 - 49th Avenue NE at 6th Street NE
 - 44th Avenue NE at 4th Street NE
 - 37th Avenue NE at Hart Boulevard NE
 - Reservoir Boulevard at Gould Avenue NB
 - 49th Avenue NE at Johnson Street NE
 - 45th Avenue NE at Chatham Road NE
 - 37th Avenue NE at Central Avenue NE
 - 37th Avenue NE at Huset Pkwy
 - 43rd Avenue NE at Central Avenue NE
 - 50th Avenue NE at Central Avenue NE
- Axon ALPR
 - 12 Columbia Heights Police Department Squad Cars



Data Privacy & Retention

- ALPR Capable cameras are required to be reported to the BCA
 - The CHPD has reported all ALPR Capable cameras to the BCA, including Squad cameras
 - Per the BCA – They only post stationary cameras and do not report squad cameras.
 - The location of all reported ALPR in MN can be found here:
 - <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/bca/data-and-reports/agencies-use-lprs-lpr>
- Data is retained for 30 days on Flocks cloud service before being automatically deleted
 - Access to the data is controlled by the CHPD and restricted to the Columbia Heights Police Department and Partner Agencies who have signed the Data Sharing Agreement within Minnesota.
 - Pictures and data captured by the ALPRs is automatically deleted
 - Search information for auditing is retained
- There is no facial recognition being done by ALPRs
- Vehicle Owner / Driver information is not available on Flock or Axon.
- Access is restricted to authorized staff
 - Access is further limited by Roles
 - Patrol are granted access to search in Minnesota
 - Investigators, Sergeants, and Crime Analysts are allowed to search all networks shared with the CHPD.
- The CHPD does not allow Statewide lookups or lookups from agencies outside of Minnesota
- Audits are required on a biennial basis
 - The last Audit was completed in late 2025
- The full Columbia Heights Police Department Policy regarding use of ALPR (Policy 426) is available on the city website.

Policy 426

Columbia Heights PD Policy Manual
Law Enforcement Policy

Automated License Plate Readers (ALPR)

426.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for the capture, storage and use of digital data obtained through the use of Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) technology (Minn. Stat. § 626.8472).

426.2 POLICY

The policy of the Columbia Heights Police Department is to utilize ALPR technology to capture and store digital license plate data and images while recognizing the established privacy rights of the public.

All data and images gathered by the ALPR are for the official use of this department. Because such data may contain confidential information, it is not open to public review.

426.3 ADMINISTRATION

The ALPR technology, also known as License Plate Recognition (LPR), allows for the automated detection of license plates. It is used by the Columbia Heights Police Department to convert data associated with vehicle license plates for official law enforcement purposes, including identifying stolen or wanted vehicles, stolen license plates and missing persons. It may also be used to gather information related to active warrants, homeland security, electronic surveillance, suspect interdiction and stolen property recovery.

All installation and maintenance of ALPR equipment, as well as ALPR data retention and access, shall be managed by the Administration Captain. The Administration Captain will assign members under his/her command to administer the day-to-day operation of the ALPR equipment and data.



Data sharing Agreement with LE Partners

- The CHPD is currently sharing camera access to 44 other agencies in Minnesota
 - As of early 2026 we do not share with any Federal or Out-of-state agencies
- A signed Data Access Agreement is required before an agency is granted access to our system.
- The CHPD is receiving access to 102 different LE agencies and we have signed similar agreements with them.
- These partnerships have proven to be a helpful and a critical tool that allows Law Enforcement to see if a suspect vehicle has left the city and establish where they have been and where they haven't.
 - This cuts down on investigations time and is a key to help solve many cases.
- We do not currently share any ALPR information captured by Axon.

Columbia Heights ALPR Data Access Authorization

Minn. Stat. § 13.824, subd. 7(b)

Requesting Agency: _____

Purpose

This authorization permits the Requesting Agency to access Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) data maintained by the Columbia Heights Police Department (Authorizing Agency) for legitimate, specified, and documented law enforcement purposes as required by Minn. Stat. § 13.824.

Conditions of Use

1. Authorized Personnel Only – Only individuals duly authorized by the Chief, Sheriff, or head of the Requesting Agency may access Columbia Heights ALPR data.
2. Mandatory Fields – For every access event, the Reason and Case Number fields must be fully completed by the requesting agency.
3. Audit Trail – All access must be recorded in the system's audit trail, including user, date/time, and mandatory field entries.
4. Permitted Use Only – Data use is restricted to active criminal investigations in compliance with law and agency policies.
5. No Unauthorized Sharing – ALPR data may not be disseminated except as permitted by law.

Term & Revocation

This authorization is valid until revoked in writing by the Authorizing Agency. Misuse or unauthorized access may result in revocation and may carry criminal penalties under Minn. Stat. § 626.8472.

Authorizing Agency Official

Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Requesting Agency Official

Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____



CHPD Flock Transparency Portal

- The Flock Transparency Portal allows members of the public to access information on the data currently used by the Columbia Heights Police Department
 - The site can be access via the City Website under Police or by going to this URL: <https://transparency.flocksafety.com/columbia-heights-mn-pd>
- The Site also allows the export of a Public Search Audit
 - This Excel Spreadsheet allows members of the public an overview of searches done over the last 30 days.
- Officers are required to enter an Offense Type under each search before a search can be performed.
 - Officers will occasionally enter “Other” as the Offense Type.
 - This is done by Crime Analysts when assisting other local agencies search for a vehicle wanted in their Jurisdiction
 - Officers will use “Other” during a critical incident or a rapidly evolving situation when a crime is still being established but a vehicle is known.



Columbia Heights MN PD

Transparency Portal
Last Updated: Tue Apr 28 2026

Overview

Columbia Heights MN PD uses Flock Safety technology to capture objective evidence without compromising on individual privacy. Columbia Heights MN PD utilizes retroactive search to solve crimes after they've occurred. Additionally, Columbia Heights MN PD utilizes real time alerting of hotlist vehicles to capture wanted criminals. In an effort to ensure proper usage and guardrails are in place, they have made the below policies and usage statistics available to the public.

Policies



What's Detected

License Plates, Vehicles



What's Not Detected

Facial recognition, People, Gender, Race



Acceptable Use Policy

Data is used for law enforcement purposes only. Data is owned by Columbia Heights MN PD and is never sold to 3rd parties.



Prohibited Uses

Immigration enforcement, traffic enforcement, harassment or intimidation, usage based solely on a protected class (i.e. race, sex, religion), Personal use.



Access Policy

All system access requires a valid reason and is stored indefinitely.



Hotlist Policy

Hotlist hits are required to be human verified prior to action.

Usage



Data retention (in days)

30 days



Number of LPR and other cameras

12



Organizations granted access to Columbia Heights MN PD data

Anoka County MN SO, Anoka MN PD, Becker County MN SO, Belle Plaine MN PD, Blaine MN PD, Brooklyn Park MN PD [Inactive], Champlin MN PD, Chisago County MN SO, Coon Rapids MN PD, Corcoran MN PD, Cottage Grove Public Safety Dept (MN), Crystal MN PD, Dakota County MN SO, Dayton MN PD, Elk River MN PD, Faribault MN PD, Fridley MN PD, Hennepin County MN SO, Hopkins MN PD, Maple Grove MN PD, Maplewood MN PD, Medina MN PD, Minnetonka MN PD, Mounds View MN PD, New Brighton Dept of Pub Safety (MN), New Hope MN PD, Paul Bunyan Task Force MN, Pine County MN SO, Plymouth MN PD, Prior Lake MN PD, Ramsey MN PD, Rogers MN PD, Roseville MN PD, South Saint Paul MN PD, Spring Lake Park MN PD, St. Louis Park MN PD, Stillwater MN PD, University of Minnesota MN PD (Twin Cities), West Hennepin MN Public Safety Department, West Saint Paul MN PD, Willmar MN PD, Winona MN PD, Woodbury MN DPS, Wyoming MN PD



Hotlists Alerted On

NCMEC Amber Alert, MN BCA



Unique vehicles detected in the last 30 days

166,887



Hotlist hits in the last 30 days

14,291



Searches in the last 30 days

89



Public Search Audit

[Download CSV](#)



Flock Public Search Audit

id	userId	searchDate	networkCount	reason	offenseType
cc442352-f38e-42bb-8838-401e4ba41fe6	***	2026-03-29T10:13:59.985Z	48	Law Enforcement Purpose Not Otherwise Listed	Motor Vehicle Theft/Stolen
0ae049cb-517c-4f73-8df6-5addf285cc59	***	2026-03-29T23:37:35.108Z	2	Law Enforcement Purpose Not Otherwise Listed	Motor Vehicle Theft/Stolen
6b5c535f-a981-4d19-87ea-211118057b31	***	2026-03-30T19:51:37.358Z	2	Law Enforcement Purpose Not Otherwise Listed	Missing/Endangered Person/Runaway
f2514592-ecc8-4c82-b4aa-e110e3aeda6d	***	2026-03-30T20:12:22.491Z	2	Law Enforcement Purpose Not Otherwise Listed	Missing/Endangered Person/Runaway
5f4579f2-b2ab-43f9-9970-aa2bae6baedd	***	2026-03-31T19:54:44.189Z	2	Law Enforcement Purpose Not Otherwise Listed	Other
c8c6ab59-8d41-4c05-87cc-0dbf0ddb0a9d	***	2026-03-31T20:44:21.450Z	75		Assault/Battery Offenses (Domestic)
91471fc6-5544-4724-be1a-b7a998014e5e	***	2026-04-01T02:58:05.940Z	48		Assault/Battery Offenses (Domestic)
1d5fc325-eb10-4bfc-b094-449c0b417680	***	2026-04-01T03:00:54.013Z	48		Assault/Battery Offenses (Domestic)
7a384c93-ef32-4381-b1bb-1ffa5f2f80c6	***	2026-04-01T05:32:35.378Z	48		Assault/Battery Offenses (Domestic)

Field Name

Description

id	Search ID number assigned to each search. This allows the search to be found during agency Audits for more details.
userId	Officer who ran the search
Search Date	Date and time the search was initiated
Network Count	The number of agency networks searched by the current query. The CHPD has 2, one for the Flex and one for the Pole Cameras
Reason	A freeform field that is not require for a search
OffenseType	Suspected offense and reason the search is initiated. This is a required field before searches can be done.



Investigative Support and Police Uses

- Increased case clearance having active leads using Flock.
- Faster investigation especially on high priority crimes.
- Flock cameras offer real-time alerts for stolen vehicles, wanted suspects and missing person cases and Amber alerts.
- Reduction in vehicle-related crime where Flock cameras are visible.
- Flock cameras alert officers of stolen vehicles via the mobile Flock app using stolen vehicle information provided by the MN BCA.
- Axon ALPR are able to use a connection with the BCA and the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) to alert officers of possible warrants during traffic stops
 - Warrant information is always verified by the officer with dispatch to confirm its valid and correct.
 - Incorrect information present by the ALPR alert is flagged as incorrect with a reason why



Limitations & Concerns

- Possibility of false positives, showing wrong state of plate or a letter or number that is incorrect.
 - Officers are trained to verify every detail before acting upon a lead.
- Community surveillance concerns.
 - Flock cameras are pointed at the street and do not capture people or homes. The camera is triggered by a passing vehicle.
 - The angle must be specific, or it will not capture plates.
 - Axon Squad ALPR are only operational when the vehicle is turned on.
 - ALPR cameras do not conduct any facial recognition.
 - Flock does not operate as a live-stream camera. It is motion activated and only provides still images.
- Axon's ALPR audit tools are not as robust as Flock's but it is growing. ALPR Data is available upon request, and a portal is currently in the works.



This is the angle required by Flock Cameras to view Plates and Vehicle data – Any higher and they would not capture anything.

Questions

- Can flock cameras track my location?
 - No, the cameras take real time images rather than tracking a vehicles traveling history. If the vehicle hits multiple cameras, there will be multiple still shot images available.
 - Investigators will build the route of a suspect vehicle based on the camera hits.
- Can flock hear conversations?
 - No, flock cameras do not record any audio.
- Can anyone install a flock camera?
 - Yes, many businesses and neighborhood HOA's have installed flock cameras.
- Are ALPR cameras monitored 24/7 by the Police Department?
 - No. ALPRs are used when necessary to establish a suspect/stolen vehicle and/or a route the vehicle has taken. The cameras are running, not actively live recording, 24/7 and will alert officers of stolen vehicle hits.
- Does Flock or Axon have access to vehicle owner / driver information?
 - No. ALPRs provide a photo of a vehicle with Make/Model/Color/Body Type/ Location (Based on camera location). PII (Personal Identifiable Information) is not available from ALPR vendors and is not shared by the Police Department. Driver images may be captured on camera, but it is not being documented by the ALPR system.
- Can ALPR be incorrect?
 - Yes, Officers and Analysts encounter incorrect information on plates such as wrong state or that are incorrectly flagged to have warrants. Officers cross check with dispatch and confirm the information is correct before acting accordingly.
- Who controls the data gathered by the department ALPRs?
 - The Columbia Heights Police controls the data and access to it.
- Flock has provided the following links to answer questions that they have received:
 - <https://www.flocksafety.com/trust>
 - <https://www.flocksafety.com/trust/data-privacy>
 - <https://www.flocksafety.com/trust/myths-facts>

